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ABSTRACT

Recent evidence suggests that the 1982 American Psychological Association nuclear freeze resolution is reflective of a consensus among psychologists. The evidence also suggests that while the expressed attitudes of psychologists are supportive of the freeze, the attending demonstrative behaviors are not present. To facilitate overcoming this behavioral impasse and to emphasize that one psychologist can make a difference, a blueprint to action was developed at the individual, family, local, community, national, and international levels and in the areas of education, research, practice, and organizations. A broad array of options is presented ranging widely in time commitment and level of influence. Options are available at several levels: (1) individual (reflection, prayer, and voting); (2) family (nonviolence, conversation, and books); (3) local community (civic participation, school interest, and establishment of nuclear free zone); (4) national (letter writing and peace initiatives); (5) international (cultural exchange and letter writing); (6) education (support local peace center, teach conflict resolution, and encourage students to write visions of peace papers); (7) research (role of mutual ignorance, mental health aspects of war, and conflict resolution); (8) practice (deal with clients' fears); and (9) organizations (join groups such as Psychologists for Social Responsibility). (Author/ABL)

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Practical Peace Efforts for a Psychologist: A Blueprint to Action

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Abstract

Recent evidence suggests that the 1982 American Psychological Association (APA) nuclear freeze resolution is reflective of a consensus among psychologists. The evidence also suggests that while the expressed attitudes of psychologists are supportive of the freeze, the attending demonstrative behaviors of both APA and its members are not present. To facilitate overcoming this behavioral impasse and to emphasize that one psychologist can make a difference, a blueprint to action is outlined at the individual, family, local community, national and international levels and in the areas of education, research, practice, and organizations. A broad array of options is presented ranging in time commitment and level of influence.

Practical Peace Efforts for a Psychologist:

A Blueprint to Action

The 1982 American Psychological Association (APA) nuclear freeze resolution has raised much controversy and debate within APA regarding the appropriate use of the professional role in social/political issues. Beyond sponsoring the debate in the pages of the American Psychologist (Kimmel, 1985; Klineberg, 1984; Payton, 1984; Robinson, 1984; Wagner, 1985), APA has done little to operationalize the resolution. If, and how, APA will enact the intent of the resolution, remains undecided, and ultimately a political question. As long as the debate remains the focal point of APA's involvement, it appears that an impasse has been reached somewhere between rhetoric and action.

Recent evidence suggests that individual psychologists are at a similar impasse between expressed and demonstrated attitude. Klineberg (1984, American Psychologist) asserts that the APA freeze resolution does, in fact, reflect the concern of the vast majority of APA members. Recent independent surveys by McConnell et al. (in press, American Psychologist) and Polyson, Stein, and Sholley (in press, American Psychologist) lend direct support to Klineberg's assertion. The findings of the two independent studies indicate that psychologists support advocacy as well as the spirit of the freeze resolution. McConnell et al. also report that while attitudes which favor advocacy are present, demonstrative behaviors are not; most psychologists had not given time, energy, or money to the freeze movement.

Most psychologists read (relevant literature), talk (informal discussions), and sign (petitions). Many psychologists want a "better connection" -- proactive and direct activities -- between themselves and nuclear affairs. They want to overcome feelings of futility, get involved, and make a contribution however small. Here is a "Whitman's sampler" -- a blueprint to action -- of practical peace efforts.

I. Individual

- A. Reflection. Think carefully about peace. Try to define it. Open yourself to consider personal courses of constructive action.
- B. Prayer and Meditation. Pray for peace. Request your church to begin discussions and programs on peace and conflict resolution.
- C. Vote. Be sure to vote in all elections. Carefully study and vote on all peace and nuclear issues and/or candidates. Register friends and others to vote.

II. Family

- A. Practice nonviolence. Conflict is a part of the process of living. The response to conflict is learned and reflects the family's values. Ensure your family responds to conflict creatively without violence.
- B. Protective "umbrella" removal. Many families ban all painful topics from family conversation. Such "mutual protection strategies" reap high costs in children's

despair and negativity and distrust of adults.

Openness and accurate information are very important.

- C. Children's books. Encourage your children to read books such as Dr. Seuss's The Butter Battle Book (Random House). It is a nuclear war satire designed to inform the young and remind their elders of the consequences of mindless hostility coupled with escalating intervention.

III. Local community

- A. Civic participation. Attend and participate in community forums, neighborhood group discussions, and resolutions regarding issues of peace and conflict resolution.
- B. Newspaper. Write a letter to the editor of your local newspaper. Encourage the newspaper to provide coverage of peace activities and to endorse efforts such as the U.S. Institute of Peace.
- C. Resource support. Host a pot-luck supper in your home and letter-writing session and/or phone tree.
- D. Schools. Two hot new subjects around the schoolhouse are nuclear war and peace or conflict resolution. Teaching guides come from the National Education Association and Educators for Social Responsibility. Encourage your local elementary and secondary schools to include these subjects.
- E. Nuclear Free Zone. A nuclear free zone is the

prohibition of all development, testing, transportation, deployment, funding and usage of nuclear weapons within designated borders. Make your community a nuclear free zone (NFZ). Petition your city council or start a community-wide ballot initiative campaign for an NFZ resolution. Currently, there are over a thousand NFZ communities, world-wide.

VI. National

- A. Write the President. Request the president to accept the 1983 recommendation of 11,500 physicists -- including 22 American Nobel Laureates -- to halt all further testing, production and deployment of nuclear weapons.
- B. No First Use Resolution. Ask your congressional representative and senator to support this declaration by the USA that we will not be the first country to use nuclear weapons in future conflicts.
- C. United States Institute of Peace. Write your congressional representative and senator to encourage continued and increased funding. The Institute embodies the heritage and ideals of the American people for peace. It will develop a range of effective options, in addition to armed capacity, that can leash international violence and manage international conflict.

V. International

- A. Send the Krelim a message. Write an "I vote for

peace" message, sign your name and place it in an envelope addressed to Mr. Mikhail Gorbachev, 4 Storaya Ploshchad, Moscow, U.S.S.R.

- B. Cultural exchanges. Support the exchange of artists, scientists, students, government officials, children, and special citizens' study groups. Join tours to Russia, China, etc.
- C. United Nations. Challenge the concept of "sovereign" countries. Help strengthen international law and cooperative enterprises through the United Nations.
- D. Soviet-American Photo Exchange. A picture of you and your family in the living room of your home is sent to a Soviet family who in turn sends a similar photo to you. The exchange makes a clear statement in favor of more personalized and maybe safer world. Contact Association for Humanistic Psychology for information.

VI. Education

- A. Local peace center. Help establish and support a local or regional center for peace studies and conflict resolution in collaboration with colleges, universities, and other community organizations.
- B. Conflict resolution. Develop and teach a course or curricular sequence in conflict resolution from the individual to the international level.
- C. Textbooks. Encourage publishers to include conflict resolution, nuclear arms and peace issues in

introductory psychology books and higher level references.

- D. Your current courses. Include war and peace issues in your present courseload. For example, part of one lecture could address the interface between your area of expertise and war and peace.
- E. Visions of peace. Encourage students to write an essay from the point of view of someone in the year 2010, telling how a lasting peace had been established among the nations of the world. The hope is to show how a better world could evolve from a succession of events, not a single conference.
- F. Resource materials. Found a library of books, articles and audio-visual materials dealing with the psychological effects of living in the nuclear shadow. Start a speakers' bureau.

VII. Research

- A. Perception in international relations.
- B. The role of mutual ignorance and national stereotypes.
- C. Dehumanization of the enemy.
- D. Mental health aspects of war and the threat of war.
- E. Psychological aspects of a window of vulnerability and deterrence.
- F. Conflict resolution.
- G. Superordinate goals.
- H. Self-fulfilling prophecy.
- I. A study of world leaders who held pro-nuclear

positions while in office but who became strongly anti-nuclear once they left public service.

- J. International Peace Research Association (IPRA). Join IPRA which advances interdisciplinary research into the conditions of peace and the courses of war and other forms of violence. It facilitates contacts and cooperation between scholars and educators throughout the world. It encourages the worldwide dissemination of results of peace research.

VIII. Practice

As a psychotherapist, deal with clients' nuclear fears and despair. For example, validate feelings of distress for the world, encourage disclosure, counter fatalism, and encourage pro-active assertive responses.

- IX. Organizations interested in the psychological dimensions of peacework.
 - A. Psychologists for Social Responsibility
 - B. Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues (Division 9 of the American Psychological Association)
 - C. U.S. Institute of Peace
 - D. Union of Concerned Scientists
 - E. Council for a Livable World
 - F. Nuclear Free America
 - G. War Resisters League
 - H. The Albert Einstein Institution
 - I. Educators for Social Responsibility

- J. Women's Action for Nuclear Disarmament
- K. Family Therapists for Peace
- L. Physicians for Social Responsibility
- M. United Campuses to Prevent Nuclear War
- N. Activation of local, state, and national psychological organizations in the psychological dimensions of peace work
- O. The Peace Museum
- P. Peace Development Fund (grant money)
- Q. Nuclear Free Zone Registry
- R. Association of Humanistic Psychology
- S. The Carnegie Foundation (grant money)
- T. The Ford Foundation (grant money)
- U. The MacArthur Foundation (grant money)
- V. The Joan B. Kroc Foundation (grant money)
- W. The Gordon Allport Intergroup Relations Prize.
Awarded to the best paper or article of the year on intergroup relations. Contact The Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues.
- X. International Peace Research Association

Conclusions

This presentation has attempted to undercut feelings of impotence regarding the nuclear threat and to bridge the impasse between expressed and demonstrated attitude by offering a blueprint to action for peace work. It was suggested that an individual psychologist has a broad array of possible options ranging from small time commitments to full time activism and from individual levels of

influence to larger and multiple systemic impact. It is our hope that the present blueprint to action can facilitate a move beyond expressed concern and a personal operationalization of the freeze resolution among individual psychologists.